

[REDACTED]

From: John Maynard [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 31 July 2019 8:24 PM
To: Local Government Legislation Review (DPaC)
Subject: Council Meetings - Questions Without Notice from the Public

To whom it may concern

Since attending Kingborough Council meetings, I have learnt that the public has no ability to ask Questions Without Notice (QWN) on agenda items.

In my opinion, this denies ratepayers the chance to question Councillors on important issues on which they are just about to vote.

Often this occurs in situations which are commonly, but not restricted to matters relating to budgets and Council finances, where Councillors, either through insufficient knowledge or having been inadequately briefed, are not properly equipped to cast an informed vote.

At Kingborough, agendas are uploaded to Council's website on the Thursday before a Monday night's Council meeting.

It is only then that ratepayers learn what is on the agenda.

Often agenda items are accompanied by reports from Council staff, and often these reports represent the sole source of information from which Councillors decide which way they might vote.

However, because of Council's policy to disallow QWN on agenda items, there is no avenue to inform or question Councillors.

Members of the public often have expertise and/or experience in the subject matter on agendas, which would be valuable to the debate.

The inability to ask QWN denies Council's access to this expertise and experience to the detriment of Council decision making.

It is true that Questions On Notice (QON) can be submitted at least 7 days before Council meetings and these, along with replies, are listed on the agenda.

However, because the public is unaware of what will appear on the agenda, these QON are sometimes misdirected or at worst, irrelevant, to the matters actually under discussion.

Therefore I believe that Councils should accept QWN on agenda items and this should be authorised in the provisions of the Local Government Regulations as they relate to Public Question Time.

Thank you

John Maynard
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]